DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 065 012 FL 003 437

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TITLE Foreign Language Learning: Fact or Fiction.
PUB DATE 13 May 72
NOTE 28p.; Speech presented at the Pennsylvania State Modern Language Association Spring Conference, Millersville State College, Millersville, Pa., May 13, 1972

EDRS PRICE MF-$0.65 HC-$3.29
DESCRIPTORS *Applied Linguistics; Instructional Materials; Instructional Program Divisions; *Language Instruction; *Learning Theories; *Modern Languages; *Second Language Learning

ABSTRACT

Von Humboldt wrote in 1836 that "....one cannot really teach language but can only present the conditions under which it will develop spontaneously in the mind in its own way..." The author critically illustrates his reasons for supporting this theory of language learning. Concluding remarks summarize advantages and disadvantages of using contrived educational materials in the classroom. (RL)

ED 065012

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Foreign Language Learning: Fact or Fiction[1]

In 1836 von Humboldt, discussing the rationalist point of view as applied to foreign language learning, concluded "that one cannot really teach language but can only present the conditions under which it will develop spontaneously in the mind in its own way...

This view contrasts sharply with the empiricist notion...that language is essentially an adventitious construct, taught by 'conditioning'...or by drill and explicit explanation...relatively independent in its structure of any innate mental faculties".[2] The former view has been more or less maintained by Leibniz and Plato and the latter view by modern psychologists and philosophers such as Skinner, Quine, and Wittgenstein.

Now it is no secret that after the National Defense Education Act went into effect a little more than ten years ago, huge sums of money in the form of grants from the Government were employed to develop audiolingual materials and train secondary and elementary school teachers in the use of so-called "conditioning and pattern drill techniques". Even before NDEA 1958, an audiolingual methodology was developed and employed by the staff of the Foreign Service Institute in Arlington, Virginia.

The work done by Robert Stockwell and his co-authors in Spanish and Dan Desberg and his co-authors in French antedates by several years the Glastonbury materials, which served as the prototype for

FL003437

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many of the commercially produced audiolingual materials currently in use.[3]

If we take into consideration materials designed to teach English as a foreign language, then the work done by Lado and Fries at the University of Michigan antedates the Foreign Service Institute materials by more than a decade.[4] I can, of course, mention similar materials developed elsewhere.

In any event, what is significant is the fact that the concept of the structurally seeded dialogue buttressed by substitution, correlation, and transformation drills--which make up the real blood and bones of the audiolingual approach--was virtually unknown to most high school and college teachers of foreign language only ten years ago. It was primarily the expansion of NDEA FL Institutes and NDEA FL research projects that brought the audiolingual method swiftly, abruptly, and in some cases, traumatically to the foreign language teacher's attention.

I need not tell you that many teachers were brought to water, who didn't drink--not always because they didn't want to--but because they could not! Teachers brought up in the grammar-translation tradition and the direct method alike found the structuralist's jargon--if not his rationale--more cryptic than illuminating. Many high school teachers were well aware that they lacked certain language skills before they became institute participants. They also discovered that, even after they underwent a period of indoctrination and training, they still did not acquire the skills with the new tech-

niques they were expected to utilize in the classroom. Nor is it any secret that the summer institutes were often staffed by visiting faculty members who could not or would not institute the new methods they were advocating when they returned to their home institutions. This did not prevent some well-meaning but over-zealous converts among high school administrators from advising colleagues to "either retread or retire."[5]

Despite all the adverse reaction, disappointments, and initial frustrations, new hey procedures did catch on and are very much in evidence in high school and college foreign language teaching today. The need for proselytizing has not disappeared, but it is certainly less acute--and there is a genuine interest and willingness on the part of foreign language teachers to incorporate audiolingual techniques into their programs.

What has been done in the teaching of foreign language skills during the last ten years is certainly an improvement over what was accomplished during the decade following World War II. However, what has been achieved has certainly not lived up to expectations.

When Noam Chomsky during the 1966 Northeast Conference on the Teaching of Foreign Languages stated that Linguistics had not contributed anything of significance to foreign language teaching, he was criticized by both linguists and methodologists alike--somewhat vehemently you will recall if any of you were present. After the discussion period, I was asked by ex-NDEA participants, audiolingual

material-writer-specialists, and applied linguists why I had not raised my voice in protest since I had edited and co-authored the Manual and Anthology of Applied Linguistics, which was subsidized by NDEA, used in the early NDEA institutes, and which went into great detail about types of drills, tagmemic analysis, and the application of new key procedures to the foreign language teaching situation.

I startled them, I know, when I stated that I was inclined to agree with Chomsky although I thought that he had stated his position too strongly. In my opinion it was not that Linguistics had contributed nothing to foreign language teaching, but that its contribution was patently limited.

Now I have been saying this publicly and in writing at least since the 1963 NE Conference when I was chairman of the Working Committee on Listening and Speaking. I pointed out the numerous interference problems resulting from wrong-analogizing in both the source and target languages.[6] At that time I suggested that pattern drills be used to emphasize morphophonemic phenomena, such as liaison and elision in French, in order to develop an intellectual awareness of fundamental grammatical relationships--rather than develop speech habits themselves. I also proposed a team-teaching procedure that would guarantee ninety percent acquisition of the subject matter taught by a modified audiolingual approach.[7]

The last time I spoke here at Millersville to members of the PSMLA, I stated that if a foreign language student acquired one

hundred percent of the subject matter taught by any known method--traditional or audiolingual--he would get no further than he is now--on a plateau that leads nowhere.[8]

Now for some strange reason my remarks have been construed as being anti-audiolingual and even counter-revolutionary. I prefer to believe that they have been misunderstood--first perhaps because I have been advocating learning to read by employing bilingual techniques that make extensive use of the source language, English--and secondly because I claim that no one can really learn to converse in a oreign language (and I don't mean merely speak) unless he has learned to <u>understand</u> the language <u>aurally</u>.

My own preoccupation with contrastive analysis and sentence embedding procedures has taught me that each language has so many idiosyncratic and language particular rules that no foreign language course in existence could possible incorporate all the <u>constraints</u> into a pedagogical system based solely on drills, dialogues, and similarly contrived materials.

This is not to say that contrived materials have no value. On the contrary, they are excellent pedagogical tools for building a good foundation in the foreign language--for what I have called attaining the stage of Nucleation.[9] But audiolingual materials by themselves are not the only means for building a good foundation--although I believe they are the best media for doing so. Nonetheless the most sophisticated audiolingual materials--that is, the best contrived materials--will never take the student beyond the

nucleation stage so that he may eventually develop language competence let alone language proficiency.

Let us briefly examine some of the rationale that lies behind the use of pattern drills and structurally seeded dialogues.

In 1960 twelve years before the current lively interest in language universals,[10] I stated in our first version of the Manual and Anthology of Applied Linguistics that the sentences of any language could probably be derived from three basic frames such as Robert speaks (Frame A), Robert speaks English (Frame B), Robert is English (Frame C).[11] Thus in French we have Robert parle, Robert parle français, Robert est français; in Italian Roberto parla, Roberto parla italiano, Roberto è italiano; in Russian Rabyert gavarit, Rabyert gavarit pa-russki, Rabyert russkiy, etc.

At that time we proposed a four-fold approach to the language teaching situation, utilizing the techniques of (1) formal contrast, (2) structural marking, (3) tagmemics, and (4) transformation grammar. We stated that the "new key" approach lay mainly in the systematic and intensive application of these techniques to the acquisition of audiolingual skills. To illustrate our point, we isolated certain words and parts of words having grammatical meaning from English and selected foreign languages, and then appended them to similar but "bogus" lexical stems to show how nonsense sentences with real structural features could be translated from one language into another. For example, the nonsense English sentence The narpish galasts morted the fleens staticusly could be translated into the nonsense French

sentence Les galâts marpeux mourtaient statieusement les flènes, which was translatable into Spanish as Los galastos narposos mortaban estasiosamente las flanas, or into German as Die narpischen Galasten morteten die Flane statzlichweise, etc.

The technique of formal contrast could be used not only to determine similarities and differences between utterances of two languages but differences between utterances of the same language in different contextual environments. Thus "We preferred to go to the movies" is translatable in Spanish either as Preferimos ir al cine or Preferíamos ir al cine. However, "We preferred" in the sentence "We preferred to go to the movies on Thursday" is rendered as Preferimos when el occurs before jueves but as Preferíamos when los replaces el (Preferimos ir al cine el jueves, Preferíamos ir al cine los jueves).

Tagmemics with its technique of inserting lexical items into functional slots such as subject-as-actor, subject-as-goal, etc. was a natural vehicle for the different kinds of substitution and correlation drills performed with basic (and converted) A, B, C frames. Thus, the concept--but not necessarily the habit--of making liaison between subject and verb may be learned by a series of substitution drills such as

(Simple Substitution)

1. Ils élargissent le boulevard.
2. ___ agrandissent _____.
3. ___ embellissent _____.
4. ___ aplanissent _____.

etc.

and these could be subsequently tested by correlation drills such as

(Progressive Correlation)

1. Ils élargissent le boulevard.
2. Nous _____. (Nous élargissons le boulevard)
3. ____ agrandissez _____. (Vous agrandissez le boulevard)
4. On _____. (On embellit le boulevard)
5. Elles (pluriel) _____. (Elles embellissent le boulevard)

etc.

Utilizing the model of generative grammar, basic frames were called kernel sentences, and the structures underlying them were manipulated in definite ways to produce grammatical surface structures via a process known as the transformation--or better still, "conversion"--testing drill. And so we might have the following base sentences where the object noun phrases are replaced by the

appropriate pronoun and the sentences are made interrogative.

(Simple Conversion)

Il se souvient de votre voyage.	S'en souvient-il?
Vous vous souvenez de ma tante Josephine.	Vous souvenez-vous d'elle?
Tu m'enverras des cartes postales.	M'en enverras-tu?
Nous avons apporté des oranges au malade.	Lui en avons-nous apporté?

etc.

Since we have stated that the complex sentences of a language are formed from one or more simple sentences of the type (A) Robert speaks, (B) Robert speaks [French/to Mary], (C) Robert is French, then a French sentence having the surface structure L'agent a dit au voleur / qui a été giflé de toutes ses forces par le commissaire / de sortir sur le champ is really converted from the deep structure underlying two type B sentences such as L'agent a dit quelque chose au voleur and Le commissaire a giflé le voleur de toutes ses forces and one type A sentence Le voleur est sorti sur le champ. The abstract interpretative rules, the details of which I shall omit here, would transform Le commissaire a giflé le voleur de toutes ses forces into qui a été giflé de toutes ses forces par le commissaire and would transform Le voleur est sorti sur le champ into de sortir sur

le champ and would embed these two transforms at the proper places in L'agent a dit quelque chose au voleur to give the surface structure L'agent a dit au voleur / qui a été giflé de toutes ses forces par le commissaire / de sortir sur le champ, once the phonological rules were applied.

Thus the embedding technique could be used in complex transformation testing drills to determine whether the student has learned the principle--but not necessarily the habit--of using relative pronoun forms in French.

(Complex Conversion)

1. Où est le journal. Il lisait le journal. → Où est le journal qu'il lisait?
2. Où est le pont? On parlait du pont. → Où est le pont dont on parlait?
3. Où est la ville? La ville est entourée de fortifications. → Où est la ville qui est entourée de fortifications?

etc.

Now it must be obvious to anyone who teaches foreign languages that the best drills and the most precise grammatical statements do not prevent students from making non-grammatical sentences such as *Que Robert voit-il, and *Robert fut donné l'argent--an agrammatical transform from On a donné l'argent à Robert. A native speaker of English knows that he can say "I gave the foreign money to Robert"

and "I spoke the foreign language to Robert." He knows he can also say "I gave Robert the foreign money" but not "I spoke Robert the foreign language." In the same way, a native Frenchman knows he can say Robert donne de l'argent or Robert donne l'argent with different meanings. However, the sentence "Money interests Robert" is rendered in French as L'argent intéresse Robert but not *De l'argent intéresse Robert. Yet De l'argent intéresserait Robert with the meaning "Money would interest Robert" is perfectly acceptable.

The multitude of co-occurrence restrictions on nouns, verbs, adjectives, prepositions, different construction types, etc. are so numerous in any given language, that it is amazing that students succeed in learning as much foreign language as they do. If by some miracle we could incorporate all the known semantic, syntactic, and phonological features into a set of ideal foreign language teaching materials and have an ideal teacher teaching a group of ideal foreign language students under the most ideal classroom conditions, we still would find that not all students would learn the same things, ideally or otherwise. Students--even ideal ones--simply do not learn a second language in the same way. They probably do not learn their native language in the same way. Foreign language materials, contrived as they are, never take into consideration individual differences among students. And even if they did, we simply do not know enough about language structure or cognitive processes to know what should go into the materials or how the student

should go about learning them. Nevertheless, some of us do manage to learn a foreign language not because of the system, but in spite of it. What each of us brings to, and extracts from, the language learning situation is a mystery.

When a child learns his native language, he finds himself steeped in a mass of language that is far from ideal. He hears false starts and stops, hemming and hawing, baby talk, distorted speech, non-linguistic noise--and from this state of chaos which represents the so-called primary linguistic data, he somehow constructs a grammar. If speakers of more than one language are part of his linguistic environment, he constructs more than one grammar. The ability to construct a grammar from a new language diminishes with age.

Now consider the ordinary foreign language classroom with a teacher who may or may not have native fluency and some twenty-five students who are no longer children. All the language activity that goes on in the classroom represents most of the primary linguistic data presented to the students for internalization. This includes incorrect as well as correct responses on the part of the students. Then what kind of foreign language is actually internalized if any?

Actually, what can be expected from pedagogical materials? What kind and how much of the structure present in the real world is present in contrived materials? Could a child with his given faculté de langage learn a language from such materials?

Frankly, no one has proved that it is impossible, but thus far

no act of faith in any method has proved that it is possible. We might raise the question as to whether foreign language proficiency can be developed in an artificial unicultural situation represented by the average classroom.

There is one way of finding out, however. I feel that certain universities are already wrestling with the question in some of the Ph.D. and Master of Arts in Teaching Programs. Still the answer to the question can only come from a foreign language program that is geared exclusively to the acquisition of language, and not dominated or watered down by departmental programs that are linguistically, esthetically, psychologically, or educationally oriented. I am absolutely in favor of departments that are dedicated to preparing majors for careers in literary studies, linguistics, or foreign language teaching--but not at the expense of those students who want to major primarily--if not exclusively--in understanding, speaking, reading, and writing one or more foreign languages.

I feel that the answer to my question will come from future language majors--not necessarily teachers--who will hold a B.A. in what might be called Language Proficiency and an M.A. or Ph.D. in Language Acquisition. Candidates for the graduate degrees will be directly concerned with doing research in the acquisition of all four skills in an artificial, unicultural situation. They might take courses in linguistics, literature, psychology, logic, anthropology, etc.,--but their main concern will be problems of language acquisition for undergraduate majors and non-majors in foreign languages.

Candidates for the B.A. in Language Proficiency will be concerned with developing near native proficiency in the four skills.

If a foreign language can be learned in a classroom, it will develop in an academic atmosphere that favors the kind of program I have been describing. It will not develop in a program that considers the acquisition of language skills secondary to the study of literature or linguistics. The creation of such a program would in no way lower academic standards. In fact they would raise them. The eventual outcome could be that the acquisition of foreign language skills such as listening comprehension and reading would occur earlier than they do now, if ever.

I should like to say a few words about how the horizons of language learning might be widened even under present day conditions by the use of "controlled" materials. Whereas contrived materials are intentionally designed to develop a student's awareness or a "state of expectancy" for fundamental grammatical relations that underlie the marriage of speech sounds with meaning, controlled materials enlarge the range of awareness of linguistic form and complex syntactic constructions in order to contribute to the linguistic competence and eventual linguistic performance of the learner. Controlled materials are transitional materials and are used in the post-nucleation or intermediate stage. They are not specifically designed to develop "active" control of the language. Rather they attempt to incorporate the structural features of the

real world since they make exclusive use of "live" written texts (novels, stories, newspaper articles, etc.) and recorded or taped texts (radio and televised broadcasts, interviews, soundtracks of films, etc.). In the case of reading, the pedagogical materials in existence today make good contrived materials, but they will not lead the student to liberated reading. Readers with vocabulary lists in the back are the norm rather than the exception. No provision is made to reduce asymptotically the amount of "puzzle-solving" associated with looking up words in vocabulary lists or dictionaries. Progress in reading by this "hunt and pick" method is slow and deadly.

A Reading Module such as the one I am about to read represents a portion of a bilingual contrastive text designed to teach reading to intermediate--not beginning--foreign language students. The text is "real," i.e., it is not contrived or seeded with pedagogical grammatical principles. This is the kind of reading material I have proposed elsewhere for the post-nucleation stage. During this stage the student has learned that each sentence in English and French is one of the three basic types of frames A, B, and C mentioned earlier, or a combination of two or more of these basic types.

Controlled Materials

Bilingual Reading Selection[12]

Because I tell them both off,	Parce que je les renvoie dos à dos
Lachaume and Dubreuilh;	Lachaume et Dubreuilh;
he damned well deserves	Il n'a pas volé
what he's getting;	ce qui lui arrive;
it'll teach him	ça lui apprendra
not to play both sides.	à miser sur les deux tableaux.
If he's an intellectual,	Si c'est un intellectuel,
then he shouldn't sacrifice	alors qu'il ne sacrifie pas
intellectual virtues to politics;	à la politique les vertus de l'intellectuel;
if he considers them	s'il les considère
as a useless luxury,	comme un luxe inutile,
let him say so	qu'il prévienne
and when it comes to thinking independently,	et pour ce qui est de la pensée libre,
we'll knock on somebody else's door.	on ira s'adresser ailleurs.

Although the student receives a short general grammatical briefing on sentence types and non-formal techniques of embedding before each reading selection, the grammatical principles and the phonetic features develop directly from reading (and even listening) samples. It must be emphasized that these materials are <u>not reading materials</u> but are

materials designed to teach reading by contrastive analysis on the intermediate level. These are controlled materials using "live" texts as are the listening materials. Note that in the bilingual text, the English equivalent is on the left and the French is on the right, which is a departure from the usual procedure with bilingual texts. Students come to the intermediate level with varying degrees of reading ability. They may be roughly classified according to three types: the type I student spends most of the time reading the French text and only occasionally looks at the English equivalent or consults a word list. This type is rare indeed. Type II tries to read the French text but must often refer to the English equivalent and/or a word list. Type III reads the English text first in order to grasp the concept. Then he looks at the French text and tries to decipher the passage in terms of the concept. He shifts back and forth from the English to the French until he can uderstand the French passage without looking at the English equivalent. Most intermediate French students belong to Type III.[13]

Questions in French, live grammar taught by structure cues, sound reading, pronunciation points, review grammar--all develop from reading and listening selections. The teacher is provided with a complete set of suggested possible answers. In the beginning, the student receives all the answers. Shortly thereafter, he only receives the answers to every other question. As he becomes more familiar with the types of questions, cues, pronunciation points, etc., he receives

fewer answers until no answers are provided at all. It must be remembered, however, that each reading lesson is preceded by a grammar lesson in "capsule form" that stresses tagmemics (functional parsing) and non-formal transformations (embeddings of noun, adjectival, adverbial clauses, etc.). In a relatively short period of time, students learn to isolate the different types of clauses within each sentence, and to recognize the order and function of each S(ubject), P(redicator), C(omplement), and A(dverbial) slot. Once these rudimentary tagmemic and transformational principles are presented and learned in a non-formal way, reading is greatly facilitated.

An example of teaching grammar or structure cues based on a novel might read like this:[14]

structure cue

1. What is the subject of the infinitive travestir in the sequence il réussissait avec un bonheur égal à travestir la réalité?

   il

2. What is the function of the sequence avec un bonheur égal?

   It is an "adverbial of manner."

3. The sequence in structure cue 1 really is made up of two clauses, one of which is il réussissait avec un bonheur égal. What is the other?

   Il travestissait la vérité.

4. Determine the clause types and the functional slots of both clauses.

S P A
Type A. il réussissait avec un bonheur égal

S P C(DO)
Type B. il travestissait la réalité.

5. The last two clauses are said to represent the "deep structures" underlying the "surface structure" il réussissait avec un bonheur égal à travestir la réalité...

What changes were made in the "deep structures" that give rise to the "surface structure?"

il travestissait is said to be transformed into the infinitive travestir, and the preposition à is inserted between the two clauses--resulting in the above surface structure.

etc.

Listening passages represent a self-pacing, self-evaluation teaching and testing device for developing listening comprehension. The procedure permits the student in an isolated booth to listen to recordings of interviews, newscasts, speeches, popular songs, excerpts from original plays, etc. recorded "live." At first he listens to a recording and looks at an accompanying written text much in the same way as for the reading selection. Then the written text is gradually withdrawn for subsequent recordings. Each recorded selection is subdivided into several sections. The student spends as much time as

is necessary in order to take down the entire section in dictation form. When he returns to the regular class session, he and other members of the class are asked to read portions of the dictation and write them on the blackboard. Pronunciation, morphophonemic patterns, and spelling and grammatical mistakes are discussed in detail by teacher and st dents. After the dictation has been thoroughly dissected as to structural embeddings, each student receives a representative mimeographed version of the recordings to compare with his corrected dictation. He returns to the laboratory and checks the recording, once more referring to those places where he experienced interfe ence. A sample listening text follows:[15]

Listening Passage

Intermediate Level, No. 4

-Voilà qui est rassurant pour les auditeurs de Sonorama qui vont se prêter à l'expérience tout à l'heure. Et vous-même dans vos séances d'hypnose n'avez jamais remarqué d'événements surnaturels ou de révélations de l'au-delà dans le comportement de vos clients.

-Euh, le surnaturel est un mot que nous n'employons jamais. En général ces phénomèmes sont des phénomèmes de clairvoyance, de télépathie, transmission de pensées. Le sujet hypnotisé obéissant d'une manière assez curieuse à la pensée avant même que l'hypnotiseur ait formulé son ordre, ces phénomèmes sont troublants.

-Eh, bien, je commence à être convaincu par l'hypnose, je le suis même tout à fait, j'attends de me prêter à votre expérience comme les auditeurs mais j'aimerais savoir quelle est l'utilité pratique de l'hypnose?

Advance Level (French Majors, No. 3)

Et puis aussi...en 1960, Robert Rocca est le héros d'une aventure extraordinaire.

"J'étais chez moi, un soir. Je dormais à poings fermés quand soudain on frappa à ma porte. Je bondis sur ma robe de chambre. On refrappa à ma porte, avec cette fois un rien d'impatience. J'allais vite ouvrir. Je restais muet de surprise. Un homme d'un certain âge, bien conservé, était devant moi, planté sur mon paillasson. C'était le Général, le Général DeGaulle lui-même. Je l'avais reconnu tout de suite, je suis très physionomiste. Alors, j'ai eu un geste de mauvaise humeur parce que moi quand je dors, vous savez, j'aime pas qu'on me dérange. Le Général me demanda la permission d'entrer avec beaucoup de civilité. Je le lui accordais avec non moins de simplicité. Nous sommes passés dans mon petit salon. Le Général s'est assis dans mon meilleur fauteuil et j'allais ouvrir la porte du cabinet de toilette pour qu'il ait la place d'étendre ses jambes. Le Général me dit: "Je suis Président de la République Française et de la Communauté." Pour avoir l'air d'intéresseé je lui demandais "Et alors? Ça va comme vous voulez en ce moment?" Le Général eut un sourire désabusé. Il me confia: "Je suis venu chez vous cette nuit, parce que j'avais envie de voir un français moyen de près, histoire de causer un peu. J'ai quitté l'Elysée dès que le Colonel Bonneval a été endormi. L'Elysée, c'est très surveillé, mais je suis le seul dont personne ne se méfie à la maison. Une fois dehors, continua le Général, j'ai marché droit devant moi, au hasard; avec un bout de craie sur un mur j'ai même écrit: "A bas Debré" pour m'amuser." Et il éclaté de rire. Pour dissiper le malaise, je lui demandais: "Alors, mon Général, la situation internationale, la conférence au sommet, Kroutchev, les grèves, qu'est-ce que ça devient?" Le Président de Gaulle jette un regard autour de lui pour s'assurer que nous étions seuls. Il me fit signe de m'approcher et, dans un souffle, il me demande:"Justement, qu'est-ce que vous en pensez? Vous croyez que ça va s'arranger, tout ça? Je sentis qu'il fallait lui remonter le moral, à cet homme. Je l'assurais de ma confiance, de mon espoir. Le Général de Gaulle me dit: "Vous êtes optimiste, c'est normal vous, vous pouvez compter sur DeGaulle tandis que moi, DeGaulle, sur qui voulez-vous que je compte?" Le Général enchaîne sur les questions sociales. Il me dit "Les grèves aussi c'est embêtant, très embêtant. Comment faire? Comment en sortir?

In the beginning, students do not understand the same portions of the text nor make the same kinds of errors. Nonetheless, after six or seven selections, each student makes a considerable improvement in listening comprehension.

How this happens is, for the time being, a problem for the psychologist not the language teacher. The point is that it does happen. Listening comprehension and reading represent "language performance" not linguistic competence. Yet the controlled reading and listening materials proposed here seem to contain the necessary primary data with just those semantic, syntactic, and phonological features that are lacking in contrived materials. In other words, whatever is missing from current pedagogical materials appear to be contained in the live materials, and it is these materials that enable our little black boxes to develop the degree of linguistic competence that may some day with adequate time-spread lead to the degree of linguistic performance characterizing the true creative aspect of language use.

What we are advocating is the use of controlled "live" reading and listening materials as primary linguistic data to serve as input to the "language acquisition model" (the student's little black box). The procedures outlined thus far are designed to help the student use his given faculté de langage to develop the necessary linguistic competence as output. The measure of whether or not this is accomplished is the degree of listening and reading skill actually attained by the student. In other words, the degree of linguistic

competence attained by a student is inferred from the actual--not necessarily the testable--degree of listening and reading skill (linguistic performance) the student shows when he is considered as a "perceptual model." As each written sentence or spoken utterance is presented to the student, he uses his acquired linguistic competence to understand written and spoken French. In generative terms, the perceptual model (student) uses its internalized generative grammar (linguistic competence) to assign a phonetic interpretation and structural description (linguistic performance) to each utterance presented to it for analysis.

Let me summarize what I have been saying: (1) Contrived materials consisting of drills and dialogues represent a valuable device for developing an intellectual "awareness" or "state of expectancy" for fundamental grammatical and phonological structure. This is not to be equated with habit formation. (2) Contrived materials are limited in the kind and number of crucial structural features necessary for the developing of the four skills in foreign language learning. (3) It is not known whether it is possible to develop language proficiency in the ordinary classroom situation. The answer will come from research work in language acquisition conducted by specialists in a field not dominated by linguistic, literary, educational, or psychological self-propitiating considerations. (4) The use of controlled materials based on "live" rather than "seeded" texts enlarges the range of awareness for variations in linguistic form and contributes to the linguistic

competence of the learner. (5) Controlled materials minimize the amount of puzzle-solving in learning to read a foreign language by directly relating meaning to form through the use of bilingual texts and analytical procedures. (6) They afford the student an opportunity to "overhear" and understand conversations between native speakers in which the student plays the part of an observer rather than an active participant. True comprehension is not effected between a student and a native speaker who adjusts his pronunciation and rate of speaking to fit the comprehension level of the listener. (7) Controlled materials incorporate provisions for student self-pacing and self-evaluation in the ordinary classroom situation. (8) Most importantly, since controlled materials are designed to overcome the factor of "individual differences" between students, they increase the possibility of defining the language goal in terms of student achievement.

Footnotes

[1]The following address was prefaced by a number of informal remarks wherein it was pointed out that the significance of the method advocated in the paper could better be appreciated in a cooperative "listening-reading-comprehension" workshop enabling PSMLA conferences to ask questions as participating students and teachers. Certain portions of the paper were presented at the Fifth Southern Conference on Language Teaching, Atlanta, Georgia, February 1969; The Second International Congress of Applied Linguistics, Cambridge University, England, September 1969; and the Second International Conference of The Ontario Modern Language Teachers' Association and the New York State Federation of Foreign Language Teachers, Toronto, Canada, March 1971.

[2]Quoted by Noam Chomsky in Aspects of the Theory of Syntax, Cambridge, Mass.: The M.I.T. Press, 1965, p. 51.

[3]Robert Stockwell et al., Spanish: Basic Course, 2 vols., Washington: Foreign Service Institute, 1959; Dan Desberg et al., French: Basic Course, 2 vols., Washington: Foreign Service Institute, 1960; Beginning Audio-Lingual Materials: French. Glastonbury, Conn.: Glastonbury Public Schools, 1960.

[4]Robert Lado et al., English Pattern Practice. Ann Arbor: English Language Institute, University of Michigan, 1947.

[5]In fairness to the language teaching profession, it must be emphasized that most secondary school teachers--and many college teachers--who were actively engaged in teaching foreign language skills were never specifically trained to do so. The situation has little improved today. Candidates for the B.A., B.S., M.A., Ph.D. degrees in Foreign Language are required to spend most of their time studying literature, if not philology, linguistics, or education. It is doubtful if as much as ten percent of undergraduate foreign language majors go on to graduate school. Those who do, have the forced choice of becoming literature, linguistics, or education majors--rarely specialists in teaching foreign language skills. As undergraduate majors they study literature; as graduate students they study literature; as teachers, most of them teach foreign language skills--for which they are ill-prepared to do. It is the classic example of the blind leading the blind. The solution to the problem will not come from a foreign language "retreading" program. Moreover, those who are advocating the degree of Doctor of Arts for skill-oriented foreign language graduate students will only succeed in providing the latter with a second-class academic degree. One might ask why the student who has acquired foreign language skills and has successfully completed research in foreign language acquisition is not fit to receive the Ph.D. degree.

[6]Simon Belasco et al., "The Continuum: Listening and Speaking," in Reports of the Working Committee 1963 Northeast Conference on the Teaching of Foreign Languages, pp. 3-21, especially pp. 9-12.

[7]No procedure will insure that students scoring ninety to one hundred percent in tests designed to neasure foreign language skills based on any known approach will make comparable scores in a standardized test. It is interesting to note that not a few students achieving at least ninety-percent of the material covered in pilot experiments or regular classroom situations achieve less than sixty percent in one or more so-called cooperative classroom skill tests. This raises the question as to what percent of the "real world" is contained in the teaching materials of a pilot study (or an average classroom situation) and especially in the testing materials of a standardized examination.

[8]Simon Belasco, "The Plateau or The Case for Comprehension: The 'Concept' Approach," The Modern Language Journal, Vol, LI, No. 2, (February, 1967), pp. 82-86.

[9]Simon Belasco, "Nucleation and The Audio-Lingual Approach," The Modern Language Journal, Vol. XLIX, No. 8, (December, 1965), pp. 482-491.

[10]Applied Linguistics materials and tests in French, Spanish, and German were developed and used in the first Colgate University NDEA Summer Language Institute in 1959. Pursuant to a contract with the United States Government, these materials were incorporated in the General Section of the first two versions of the Manual and Anthology of Applied Linguistics: General Section, French, German, Italian, Russian, Spanish, University Park, Pa.: Nittany Press, 1960; Applied Linguistics: French, German, Italian, Russian, Spanish, 5 vols., Boston: D.C. Heath, 1961. A revised version of The General Section and the French Section was published as Simon Belasco and Albert Valdman, Applied Linguistics and the Teaching of French, University Park, Pa.: Nittany Press, 1968.

[11]More specifically, Frame B is rendered as Robert speaks [English / to Mary], where this frame is said to take a direct object and/or a non-direct object.

[12]See Simone de Beauvoir, Les Mandarins, Paris: Gallimard, 1954, p. 259. The English translation of this passage is taken from Leonard M. Friedman, The Mandarins: A Novel by Simone de Beauvoir, Cleveland and New York: The World Publishing Co., 1956, p. 280.

[13]The first task of the student is to determine which type of reader he is. If he is a type III or type II student, he must admit this to himself. Then he should proceed as directed. Type I students hardly need to concern themselves with the English equivalents. They may devote their time to reading the entire novel in French. It must be stressed, however, that intermediate and even advanced students belonging to type I are rare indeed. One self-pacing, self-evaluation technique is presented to the student as follows: As you read for content, you will find it useful to keep in mind the following procedure:

For the type III reader

Step 1. Cover the French text on the right hand side of the page and read about seven (7) lines of the English text on the left hand side to yourself. Be sure to grasp the entire sense of the passage in English.

Step 2. Cover the English text and try to make sense out of the same passage from the French text.

Step 3. Now look at both the English and the French texts and make sure that you can account for every French expression in terms of the English equivalent. Try to deduce the grammatical function between clause slots and elements within each slot, i.e., to spot the subject (S), the predicator (P), the complement (C), the adverbial (A), the main or "head word" in a slot and its modifiers, etc. All words or constructions whose meaning cannot be deduced from the French and English contexts may be determined by consulting the vocabulary list in the back of the book. However, dependence upon the vocabulary list should be reduced as reading progresses.

Step 4. Cover the English text and read only the French passage.

Step 5. If you can understand the French passage perfectly, go on to Setp 6. Otherwise go back to Step 3.

Step 6. Go through the entire procedure again for the next seven (7) lines.

[14]The structure cues are based on the following passage from the novel by Pierre Boulle, Un métier de seigneur, Paris: René Juillard, 1960, p. 10. The English translation of this passage is based on the translation by Xan Fielding, A Noble Profession by Pierre Boulle, New York: Vanguard Press, 1960, p. 12.

He had started by	Il avait commencé par
writing novels./	écrire des romans./
In these/	Dans ceux-ci,/
he revealed the supreme	il déployait de la manière
qualities of a writer	la plus brillante les qualités
in the most brilliant manner;/	suprêmes de l'écrivain;/
that is to say,/	c'est-à-dire/
he succeeded with	qu'il réussissait avec

equal felicity/	un bonheur égal/
in enhancing reality/	à transvestir la réalité/
in such a way	de façon
as to endow it/	à lui faire prendre/
with the glorious hues	les couleurs glorieuses
of artistic fiction/	de la fiction artistique,/
and in polishing/	et à polir,/
and martialing the products	à ordonner les chimères
of his fantasy/	de son imagination/
in such a rational manner/	d'une manière si raisonnable/
that they eventually assumed/	qu'elles finissaient par arborer/
every appearance of reality./	toutes les apparences de la réalité./

[15]The written text of the two listening selections was taken from the magazine sonore mensuel entitled Sonorama. Unfortunately, this series is no longer published. See, for example, La boîte à sel, No. 25, (December, 1960).